

Message Text

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67

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00 DOTE-00 EB-11

FMC-04 INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 CG-00 COA-02 DLOS-06

SWF-02 FEA-02 TRSE-00 INT-08 MC-02 DRC-01 /064 W

----- 008036

R 290800Z MAR 74

FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0342

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ENRG SN

SUBJECT: DUPONT EXPLOSIVES SHIPMENT

REF: A. STATE 48308; B. SINGAPORE 1055; C. STATE 44071

D. SINGAPORE 4607; E. STATE 226030, 11/16/73.

1. IT APPEARS DUPONT HAS FINALLY WORKED OUT SOLUTION
TO EXPLOSIVE IMPORT PROBLEMS IN SINGAPORE.

2. THERE ARE THREE SEPARATE PROBLEMS:

A) EXPLOSIVES SHIPPED TO SINGAPORE WITHOUT A LICENSE
ARE BEING HELD BY GOS AND DUPONT MAY BE TRIED FOR
IMPORTING WITHOUT LICENSES.

B) A SHIPMENT OF DUPONT DETINATORS WILL ARRIVE SINGAPORE
MARCH 27 WITHOUT IMPORT LICENSES AND ARE SUBJECT TO
SEIZURE.

C) NEITHER DUPONT NOR HUGHES AND HARLOW HAVE LICENSES
WHICH WOULD ENABLE DUPONT TO CONTINUE SHIPPING EXPLOSIVES
THROUGH SINGAPORE.

2. PROBLEMS RESULTED BECAUSE OF POOR COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN
SINGAPORE POLICE DEPARTMENT DUPONT AND HUGHES AND HARLOW. THE
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POLICE NEVER INTENDED TO ISSUE LICENSE TO HUGHES AND

HARLOW BUT THIS MESSAGE WAS NOT PASSED TO HUGHES AND HARLOW OR DUPONT. THEREFORE, DUPONT LAWYERS HELD OUT HOPE FOR EARLY RESOLUTION. LAWYERS NEVER IN FACT TALKED TO RESPONSIBLE POLICE OFFICIAL AND REPORTEDLY TRIED CIRCUITOUS ROUTES AND INFLUENCE. ALL THEIR EFFORTS MERELY MADE POLICE OFFICERS DIG IN.

3. AMBASSADOR CRONK CALLED CHAIRMAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BOARD (EDB) WHO HAD TO GO TO MINISTERIAL LEVEL TO GET APPOINTMENT FOR DUPONT EXPORT MANAGER MR. E.E. PRICE TO SIT DOWN WITH CHIEF OF THE EXPLOSIVES DIVISION, MR. TAN TECK KIHREEN.

4. SOLUTIONS TO PROBLEMS WERE WORKED OUT IN TWO LONG PONTIFICATION FILLED SESSIONS BETWEEN CHIEF EXPLOSIVES DIVISION AND DUPONT'S EXPORT MANAGER, AN EMBASSY OFFICER AND AN EDB OFFICIAL. THE EXPLOSIVES NOW IN LIGHTERS IN SINGAPORE WATERS WOULD BE RELEASED TO ICI WHO WOULD REEXPORT FOR DUPONT. DUPONT SIGNED A LETTER OF UNDERTAKING AGREEING TO BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE EXPLOSIVES SHIPMENT SHOULD COURT ACTION REQUIRE ITS FORFEITURE, I.E. DUPONT WOULD PAY THE VALUE OF THE GOODS RELEASED SHOULD THE COURT CONVICT DUPONT. THE DETINATORS WOULD BE IMPORTED AND HANDLED BY ICI. SINCE THE PROBLEM WAS WORKED OUT BEFORE ARRIVAL THERE WAS NO LEGAL OFFENSE.

5. DUPONT COULD APPLY FOR A LICENSE UPON WRITING A LETTER OF UNDERTAKING SAYING THAT DUPONT AND DUPONT'S EMPLOYEES IN SINGAPORE WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL IMPORT, HANDLING AND REEXPORT OF EXPLOSIVES IN SINGAPORE. DUPONT AGREED TO SUBMIT TO POLICE THE NAMES OF ALL ITS EMPLOYEES IN SINGAPORE WHO WOULD BE HANDLING EXPLOSIVES. DUPONT COULD HIRE ROBERT HUGHES OF HUGHES AND HARLOW AS AN EMPLOYEE OF DUPONT IF IT WAS CLEAR THAT HUGHES COULD CONDUCT NO OTHER EXPLOSIVE OR EXPLOSIVE RELATED BUSINESS IN SINGAPORE. DUPONT COULD NOT CONTRACT WITH HUGHES AND HARLOW FOR HANDLING EXPLOSIVES IN SINGAPORE. ON THE BASIS OF THIS DUPONT HAS MADE ANOTHER SHIPMENT WITH THE UNDERSTANDING THAT SHOULD THE LICENSE STILL NOT BE ISSUED OR SHOULD IT BE REJECTED AN INTERIM SOLUTION COULD BE ARRANGED DIRECTLY WITH THE CHIEF OF THE EXPLOSIVES LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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DIVISION.

6. THE CHIEF OF THE EXPLOSIVES DIVISION, MR. TAN TECK KIHREEN, IS TOUGH, SELF-RIGHTIOUS, OVERBEARING, SENSITIVE ABOUT HIS AUTHORITY WHICH IS CONSIDERABLE AND PROUD. JUNE 1973 WAS LAST TIME ANYONE FROM DUPONT, HUGHES AND HARLOW OR THEIR LAWYERS HAD TALKED TO TAN. HE REFUSED TO ANSWER MAIL AND NEITHER REJECTED LICENSE NOR GAVE STATUS

REPORT. UNFORTUNATELY, IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE FOR
DUPONT TO APPROACH TAN DIRECTLY AT ANY POINT. DUPONT'S
LAWYERS REPORTEDLY ADVISED DUPONT TO AVOID DIRECT CONTACT
AND REPEATEDLY ASSURED THEM THAT THE LICENSE WAS FORTHCOMING.
TAN'S REPUTATION AS AN OGRE SCARED THE LAWYERS
OFF WHEN IN FACT WHAT WAS NEEDED WAS DIRECT CONTACT
BETWEEN TAN AND DUPONT.
CRONK

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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: MorefiRH
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
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